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THE INTERIM

SEPTEMBER 1995 HELENA, MONTANA VOL. X NO. 4

PLEASE RETURN COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Committee Holds First Meeting...The Committee on Indian Affairs held its first meeting of the interim on Thursday, August 10 in Helena. Senator Linda Nelson was elected Chair and Representative Jay Stovall was elected Vice-Chair.

To Hold Reservation Meetings...The Committee discussed the possibility of holding at least two, possibly three, meetings on Indian reservations, similar to last year's trip to the Fort Belknap Reservation. Representative Heavy Runner suggested that the Committee make every effort to meet with the general public on a reservation and not just the tribal leaders. He also suggested that the Committee focus on a key issue when it visits a reservation. For example, on the Crow Reservation the Committee could look into the current boundary issue, while at the Flathead Reservation, the issue might be the hunting and fishing agreements. By focusing on a particular issue, the Committee could better fulfill its role as a conduit between the tribes and the state.

The Committee directed staff to pursue invitations to the Crow Reservation in the fall and to the Flathead Reservation in the spring. If a third reservation visit is possible next summer, Fort Peck was suggested.

Committee Postpones Adoption of Study Plan...Staff presented a proposed study plan for Senate Joint Resolution No. 11 that requests the Committee to study state compliance with Article X, section 1, subsection (2) of the Montana Constitution concerning the preservation of the cultural integrity of American Indians. The study asks the Committee to examine

how public schools have addressed the constitutional issue; how institutions of higher education have addressed the issue, especially those with teacher education programs; and the level of knowledge of the general public. The study plan posed several study questions and identified study tasks.

One of the first questions posed in the study plan dealt with the intent of the constitutional convention delegates in including the language on cultural preservation. The Committee decided that this question should be answered before the study begins. After much discussion about constitutional intent, the Committee asked staff to mail the convention minutes that pertained to this issue and to interview several constitutional delegates in order to determine as near as possible the intent of the language on cultural preservation. The staff will report back its interview findings to the Committee. The Committee postponed adoption of the study plan until after the report is received from staff.

Committee to Meet Again in October...The Committee set its next meeting date for sometime in October, pending an invitation from the Crow Tribe to visit its reservation.

Tribal Handbook Widely Circulated...The Committee on Indian Affairs has received numerous requests for copies of "The Tribal Nations of Montana: A Handbook for Legislators" from many state agencies, including the Department of Transportation, the Attorney General's Office, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. The Office of Public Instruction has reprinted the Handbook for inclusion in its law-related education curriculum. The Department of Native American Studies at the University of Montana plans to use portions of the Handbook in some of its classes. There have also been requests for the Handbook from agencies and organizations out-of-state.

Due to the numerous requests for copies of the Handbook, the Handbook will soon be reprinted. If you would like a copy, contact Connie Erickson or Eddy McClure, Legislative Services Division, (406) 444-3064.

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

LEGAL

Ballot Measure...A ballot measure to increase the minimum wage was received on August 14 and was reviewed on August 16. Pursuant to 13-27-202(2), MCA, copies of correspondence pertaining to the ballot measure are available through the Secretary of State.

Litigation...In a suit filed against the Legislative Council by the Montana Environmental Information Center, Judge Thomas Honzel has ruled that the public may have access to bill drafting documents at all stages of the bill drafting process. A decision on an appeal is pending.

1995 MCA...The camera-ready copy for the 1995 Montana Code Annotated (MCA) is at the printer. The 1995 MCA is scheduled to be shipped to subscribers on September 19, 1995.

1995 SESSION CD-ROM

Session CD-ROM Available...The Legislative Services Division has published the 1995 Session CD-ROM. The House and Senate Journals are no longer being published in book form, and the Session CD-ROM is to be used as a replacement. The cost of the Session CD-ROM is \$150. It can be used on PC's in either a DOS or a Windows version of Folio Views 3.1.

Contents of CD-ROM...The Session CD-ROM contains three searchable Infobases: *1995 Bills and Resolutions*, *1995 Journals*, and *1995 History and Final Status*. It also contains the WordPerfect 5.1 copies of each version of every bill and resolution introduced during the session, the Session Laws, and the daily Journals of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Committee minutes are not included.

The *1995 Bills and Resolutions* Infobase contains the last version of each bill and resolution introduced in the session. If a bill was passed and approved, the session law version of the bill is included in the Infobase. Each bill has hypertext links to the *1995 Journals* and *1995 History and Final Status*.

The *1995 Journals* Infobase contains the complete text of the daily Journals of the House and Senate. Each reference to a bill or resolution is hypertext linked to the full text version of the bill in the *1995 Bills and Resolutions* Infobase, so within the Journal, the text of each bill is always available.

The *1995 History and Final Status* Infobase contains the history of each bill and resolution, including the date of introduction, sponsors, hearing dates, vote totals, etc. It also includes the Bill Subject Index, the MCA Sections Affected Table, and the Session Law to MCA Section Table. Each of these parts may be searched separately using "templates". All references to bills are hypertext linked back to the bill text in the *1995 Bills and Resolutions* Infobase.

Folio Views 3.1...Folio Views 3.1 is more than just a search program, it is electronic publishing. It also has a complete, expandable table of contents; and you can add, change, and mark information for your own use even though the session information is provided on a CD-ROM.

The Session CD-ROM contains the complete, searchable Folio Views 3.1 manual and tutorials on the CD-ROM. The help feature is context sensitive.

Customization requires the creation of a "shadow file". This file is created on your hard drive and allows you to change an Infobase from that presented on the CD-ROM. Once you have created a shadow file, you open it to search the data, not the Infobase on the CD-ROM. With a shadow file you can change fonts (if, for instance, you think the ones provided with the CD-ROM are too small), colors, and other cosmetic matters, but more importantly, you can personalize the Infobase. You can use highlighters, bookmarks, pop-up notes, and other goodies in Views 3.1.

With the shadow file open, you can use the customization tools. Highlighters allow you to block and color certain text. You choose the "name" and the color of the highlighter. Everything that you highlight with it is searchable under the name of that highlighter. You can also delete all highlights (not the text that is highlighted, but the color overlay) with one click of the button. You can add notes throughout the Infobase by creating a Note that appears on the left margin as a sticky-note icon. All notes are also searchable. Bookmarks are named places saved in the Infobase. If you often go to several places in the Infobase, you can set up bookmarks at each place, named something like "bond authority" (at Sec. 15, HB 493) and "certificate of public advantage" (at Sec. 6, HB 509). Double clicking the bookmark "bond authority" will instantly take you to Sec. 15, HB 493.

Folio Views is network friendly. The CD-ROM can be used across a network, including the use of network shadow files together with individual shadow files. Specific network installation instructions are available in Help on the CD-ROM.

REVENUE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Committee Will Meet September 29...The Revenue Oversight Committee will meet September 29 in Room 104 of the State Capitol. Terry Johnson, Legislative Finance Division, will present a summary of state revenue collections. A representative from WEFA (a national economic forecasting group) will discuss the importance of national economic forecasts in developing projections for state economic activity and in estimating state tax revenue available for appropriation. Dr. Paul Polzin, Director, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Montana, will discuss trends in state economic activity.

Committee Considers Study Proposals...At the last meeting, the Committee considered two staff study proposals. The first study would analyze, in part, the effects of proposed changes in federal income tax law on Montana. Staff will discuss some of those proposals. The other study would address property tax issues. The Committee will decide the direction of both studies depending on the activities of the Montana Tax Policy Task Force. The Task Force will meet September 8 and 9 following the Wheeler Center conference on taxation.

Coal Board to Report...The Montana Coal Board will report on the Board's recent activities as well as its plans for the 1997 Biennium. The Board awards grants and loans to local governments that are impacted by coal mining.

LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMITTEE

Committee Meets in August...The Legislative Audit Committee met August 11, 1995, in Room 104 of the Capitol Building. The following reports were presented:

FINANCIAL-COMPLIANCE AUDIT:

Judicial Branch (94-23)

A financial-compliance audit of the Judicial Branch was performed for the two fiscal years ending June 30, 1994. The report contains ten recommendations that relate to the transfer of \$454,000 to the General Fund; compliance with state law governing purchasing, personal leave, budget allocation and cash management; and proper recording of expenditures. A qualified opinion was issued on the financial schedules contained in the audit report that indicates the reader can rely on the information contained in the schedules except for the Judges' Retirement Special Revenue Fund July 1, 1992, and June 30, 1994, fund balances and general fund district court reimbursement expenditures for fiscal year 1992-93.

LIMITED SCOPE FINANCIAL AUDIT:

Limited Scope Study of Accounting and Management Support Division's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report Preparation Procedures, Department of Administration (95SP-63)

The report on the Accounting and Management Support Division, Department of Administration, Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) preparation procedures contains four recommendations. These

recommendations relate to assisting agencies to help ensure complete and accurate accounting records; timeliness of agency financial information; recording information on the accounting records in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles; and additional procedures to ensure a complete and accurate CAFR.

PERFORMANCE AUDITS:

Regional Development Program, Economic Development Division, Department of Commerce (94P-38)

The Regional Development Program provides Montana businesses and communities with individual consulting and group training regarding financial analysis, financial planning, loan packaging, state and private capital sources, and business tax incentives. The Committee reviewed and evaluated the activities for the Regional Development Program, focusing on program accountability by concentrating on management controls. Areas where improvements could be made include:

- clarifying the program's mission;
- establishing specific program guidelines;
- handling client information;
- improving communication with other economic development organizations;
- improving efforts to monitor program outcomes; and
- improving public awareness of the program.

Juvenile Justice in Montana (Follow-up to audit presented 6/18/93)

The original audit findings reported in June 1993 suggested a need for comprehensive management controls and management information throughout the juvenile justice structure. During the follow-up audit, it was found that recommended improvements to many of the identified areas have not been made. Juvenile justice management is still fragmented and lacks in-depth planning, coordination, and oversight throughout its components.

Montana State Prison Industries (Survey, 95P-02)

Montana's prison industries program is designed to provide institutional residents with the opportunity to manufacture products or provide services to assist in their rehabilitation. The prison's ranch, vocational training, and industries complex operations were compared to American Correctional Association standards. The survey objective was to determine the need for a detailed performance audit work. It was determined that the industries program provides legitimate training, production experience, and work habit skills. Where required, activities achieve self sufficiency and create savings to state agencies. No additional performance audit work is recommended.

ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING AUDIT:

Montana State University-Bozeman (95DP-01)

This report provides information regarding the general controls over the University's computer center. It contains 13 recommendations to Montana State University-Bozeman for improving controls over the University's electronic data processing environment. These recommendations address improving electronic access controls and physical security controls; establishing formal contingency procedures; and improving overall documentation of controls, policies and procedures.

Committee to Meet in November...The next meeting of the Legislative Audit Committee will be in early November.

JUVENILE JUSTICE AND MENTAL HEALTH STUDY COMMISSION

Commission Holds First Official Meeting...The Juvenile Justice and Mental Health Study Commission held its first official meeting on July 31 and August 1 in Miles City. The Commission toured the Pine Hills School and received testimony from the public and from youth corrections, mental health, and youth services providers in the region.

The Commission is reviewing House Bill No. 240, the Youth Court Act, executive branch reorganization, and testimony from the Miles City meeting in order to narrow its focus at the next two meetings.

To Meet Next in Kalispell...The next meeting will be held October 5 and 6 in Kalispell. The meeting was scheduled to lead into a key decisionmakers conference in Whitefish on October 6, 7, and 8 organized by the Center for Youth Policy. A December 7 and 8 meeting is planned for Billings.

If you have any questions about the Commission or wish to be placed on the mailing list, contact Susan Fox, Legislative Services Division, (406) 444-3064.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON VETERANS' NEEDS

Council Authorizes Additional Subcommittee...The Legislative Council recently authorized the Joint Interim Subcommittee on Veterans' Needs. This Subcommittee is a continuation of a subcommittee approved by the 1993 Legislature and requested in House Joint Resolution No. 19 approved by the 1995 Legislature. Many of the issues are of ongoing concern, such as changes in federal health care programs for veterans and the progress of the newly-opened Eastern Montana Veterans' Home in Glendive.

The Subcommittee is anticipated to have approximately two or three meetings over the interim. The first meeting will be in October or November, pending appointments to the Committee by the Senate Committee on Committees and the Speaker of the House. Susan Fox will be the research analyst and Eddy McClure will be the attorney for the Subcommittee.

If you wish to be placed on the mailing list for this Subcommittee, contact Susan Fox, Legislative Services Division, (406) 444-3064.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Committee Holds First Meeting...The Joint Oversight Committee on Children and Families (CCF) held its first meeting of the interim on August 24 and 25, 1995. The CCF, now a permanent legislative oversight committee after two interims as a temporary study and oversight committee, is responsible for monitoring existing programs and examining emerging issues affecting Montana's children and families. Senator Vivian Brooke was elected Chairperson; Representative Liz Smith was elected Vice-Chairperson.

Oversight and Study Priorities Established...Reorganization of the state's health and human service agencies, state and federal welfare reform, and the managed care mental health system will be the key oversight priorities of the CCF this interim. The CCF will also continue to carefully monitor the activities of the Interagency Coordinating Council on State Prevention Programs (ICC), which was established in 1991 as a result a CCF recommendation, and the Juvenile Justice and Mental Health Commission (JJMHC), established by the 1995 Legislature to study juvenile justice and mental health issues.

The CCF also decided to examine emerging issues related to teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse among youth, and child care needs

and services, which are critical in view of pending welfare reform that will move more parents with children into the work force. The scope of the CCF's examination of these issues will depend on its findings after background information is presented at the CCF's second meeting.

Background Information Presented....The CCF's two-day meeting began with a review of the history and prior recommendations of the previous CCF committees and an overview of key 1995 legislation affecting children and families.

Staff from the Legislative Fiscal Analyst Division presented an excellent overview of appropriations information on the state's public health, support, and protective services directly serving Montana's children and families. The CCF learned that federal block grant programs being discussed by Congress as of August 10, 1995, would most affect Medicaid programs, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, child care program funds, grants for home heating and cooling costs for low-income persons and weatherization of low-income housing, housing assistance programs, and K-12 education.

Hank Hudson, now administrator of the Family Services Division under the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), provided the CCF with an overview of the five basic initiatives of the Family Services Division:

- (1) moving resources toward family support and preservation while recognizing that children must continue to be protected;
- (2) information management through the Child and Adult Protection Service database, which will provide statewide access to information previously tracked only on paper or on separate systems;
- (3) finding permanent homes for children in the foster care system so that no child is in transition for more than a year;
- (4) redesigning the youth mental health system under the managed care program to provide community-based services; and
- (5) redesigning the juvenile corrections system in concerted effort with the Department of Corrections, which now has lead responsibility for juvenile corrections.

The CCF also received an update on the activities of the JJMHC. Many of the juvenile justice and mental health issues that will be examined by the JJMHC are of key concern to the CCF. The CCF will carefully monitor activities of the JJMHC.

Committee Develops Work Plan...The second day of the CCF's meeting was devoted to a brainstorming session with key program staff and a Committee work session. The brainstorming session was a key opportunity for program staff to interact with Committee members and to express their concerns and expectations. Additionally, all interested persons were invited to present one-page fact sheets expressing their concerns and expectations.

After a fruitful interaction with key interested persons and a Committee discussion of options and priorities, the CCF developed a draft work plan for the interim. A basic outline of the CCF work plan will be presented, revised if necessary, and adopted at the CCF's next meeting.

Next Meeting Set...The CCF will hold its second meeting on October 26-27, 1995. Although the agenda has not be finalized, tentative agenda items include:

- updates on:
 - reorganization;
 - welfare reform effects on specific state programs;
 - managed care and DPHHS' request for proposals;
 - ICC objectives and activities;
- background presentations on:
 - teen pregnancy issues;
 - drug and alcohol abuse programs;
 - child care programs and issues;
- METNET town meeting on the DPHHS's managed care request for proposals; and
- identification of specific issues for CCF oversight and study.

For more information, please contact Sheri Heffelfinger, Legislative Services Division, (406) 444-3064.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL

EQC to Meet in September...The Environmental Quality Council will meet on Thursday and Friday, September 14 and 15. The Council will receive a half-day training session on the implementation of the Montana Environmental Policy Act. The Council will also begin implementing its interim work plan which will include:

- (1) comprehensively analyzing the enforcement and compliance procedures of the state's environmental and natural resource programs (HJR 10 interim study);
- (2) continuing the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Implementation Project and assisting state agencies in integrating regulatory impacts analysis on private property rights into the MEPA environmental review process;
- (3) receiving updates on the Department of Environmental Quality's study of the elimination of joint and several liability under the state superfund statutes;
- (4) receiving updates on general water policy issues; and
- (5) analyzing the merits of an internal environmental risk assessment and prioritization process.

Council To Discuss Other Issues...Other meeting agenda items include: a joint briefing for the Legislative Council and EQC on the Honzel Decision requiring that bill drafts be accessible to the public; a water quality audit update from the Department of Environmental Quality; and an update on the Major Facility Siting Act Collaborative Study process.

For more information on these issues, please contact the EQC staff at (406) 444-3742.

COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

CSG Adopts/Recommends Reduced Services for Montana...After exhibiting sympathy towards Montana and other states for the past several years, the Council of State Governments (CSG) has invoked "reduced services" for the non-payment of dues. Quoting from the Minutes of CSG's Western Legislative Conference (WLC) Executive Committee meeting on June 24, 1995:

... it was agreed to ... impose sanctions effective July 1, 1995, for states not paying dues. The western region has two scenarios related to states not paying full dues: California and Montana.

Because of fiscal restraints, California paid only 50% (approximately \$151,000) in fiscal year 1992-93 and subsequently

has continued to pay the \$151,000. Other state organizations have been treated in the same manner. Now that the fiscal situation seems to be improving and in the face of term limits, it is hopeful that California will become a regular CSG participant and move toward complete restoration of dues payment to CSG.

Montana, on the other hand, has not paid any dues to CSG or NCSL since fiscal year 1991-92 and paid only portions to CSG for several fiscal years previous to that time. This year, Montana decided to pay a portion of dues to NCSL and none to CSG. In April, the CSG Executive Committee decided to impose its new mandatory sanctions against Montana: No CSG national meetings to be held in jurisdictions in arrears with CSG dues and no representatives holding national officer positions."

The question before the WLC was whether the region should impose reduced services to Montana. There was extensive discussion. A slice of perspectives shared follows:

- Should other states (tax dollars) pay for services for a state not paying dues?
- States not paying dues should pay full cost for services, similar to private sector rates paid to CSG for services or products.
- In the era of term limits, recruitment of new legislators and overall marketing of services and organizational benefits must be emphasized.

It was moved by Colorado Senator Jeff Wells, seconded by New Mexico Senator Gloria Howes and unanimously adopted to implement the following reduced services to Montana:

1. to support CSG's mandatory sanctions of no CSG national meetings to be held in Montana and no Montana representative to hold a national officer position;
2. no WLC regional meeting to be held in Montana and no Montana representative to hold a regional officer position; and
3. to support CSG national discretionary sanctions of no Montana representatives eligible to participate in the Toll Fellows program or international exchanges.

In an attempt to encourage Montana legislator interest and participation, discussion ensued to continue marketing to Montana legislators and staff with regular publications and meeting notices. However, it was moved by Colorado Senator Jeff Wells, seconded by New Mexico Senator Gloria Howes and adopted to implement a further reduced service to Montana by adding a 20% surcharge to the cost of CSG products and meetings that require a fee.

Example: WLC legislator fee to attend WLC Annual Meeting
 \$200
 Montana legislator fee to attend WLC Annual Meeting
 \$240

It was determined that reduced services to states not paying dues and marketing and outreach to legislators and legislatures needed to be discussed further at the next meeting.

CSG to Consider Further Reduction in Services...The CSG Executive Committee is also authorized by the CSG Governing Board to consider a further reduction in services in the form of: 1) no CSG research or inquiry services; and 2) no "free" CSG publications.

This action by CSG is understandable. For example, Montana has received an invoice for past unpaid dues totalling \$136,250 for fiscal years 1989-1993 which has gone unpaid, and dues of approximately \$107,000 for fiscal years 1994-95 are also unpaid. Montana's dues for fiscal years 1996 and 1997, \$114,600, were not appropriated by the 54th Legislature and will also not be paid.

Although neither legislators nor staff from Montana have participated fully in CSG activities for the past several years--due solely to lack of financial support--CSG has continued to respond to requests for information from Montana, and to provide subscriptions to such CSG products as The Book of the States, State Government News magazine; and the Westrends newsletter, to name several. For the time being, CSG subscriptions will continue.

Also as a direct result of CSG's reduced services, the Suggested State Legislation Conference, a CSG affiliate, had been scheduled to hold its annual meeting in Billings this summer. However, due to Montana's nonpayment of dues, the Conference made the decision to move the annual meeting. Unfortunately, the economic impact to Billings would have been significant.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FOREIGN INVESTMENT DEPOSITORY

Subcommittee Holds First Meeting...The Subcommittee authorized by Senate Joint Resolution 19 to study the feasibility of a foreign investment depository met for the first time on Friday, August 4 at the State Capitol. Senator Mike Sprague was elected Chair, and Representative Jon Ellingson was elected Vice-Chair.

The Subcommittee approved the study plan drafted by Legislative Research Analyst Stephen Maly. The plan outlines the major topics and issues to be addressed in a series of at least six meetings over a nine-month period, from August 1995 through April 1996. The document lists key questions regarding the legality, propriety, confidentiality, regulation, security, and practicality of the proposed depository. The study plan also includes a set of principles to help guide the endeavor.

- Begin with and maintain positive assumptions and expectations;
- Keep a broad scope;
- Maximize educational benefits;
- Honor legislative intent; and
- Consider alternatives.

Staff made several brief presentations to help orient the Subcommittee to the prospects, challenges, and potential benefits inherent in establishing a financial institution that would only accept deposits from non-U.S. citizens. Stephen Maly placed the initiative in a global context (touching on trends involving flight capital, tax havens, political turbulence, and financial insecurity.) Attorney David Niss explained relevant federal statutes, such as the Bank Secrecy Act of 1970. Jeff Martin outlined the implications for public finance, which are contingent on as-yet undetermined fees and/or tax liabilities. Members of the Subcommittee heard comments from state Commerce Department officials (including the Banking Commissioner), an historian, a private attorney, and a representative of the Montana Bankers Association. They were also informed that the federal Financial Crimes Enforcement Network has already demonstrated a keen interest in the Subcommittee's deliberations and findings.

To Meet Again in Helena...The second meeting of the Subcommittee is scheduled for September 7 and will be held in Helena Norwest Bank's conference room, beginning at 9 a.m. The dual focus of the meeting will be regulation and security. In the morning, a panel representing state and federal regulatory agencies will explain their respective functions in response to a hypothetical depository institution. Members of the

Subcommittee will reconvene at Norwest at 2:30 p.m., following lunch and a tour of the Federal Reserve facility. Public comment will be invited prior to the 4:00 p.m. adjournment.

The third meeting of the Subcommittee is scheduled for October 27 at the University of Montana in Missoula.

Anyone wishing further information, a copy of the study plan, or to be placed on the interested persons list is invited to call Stephen Maly, Legislative Services Division, (406) 444-3064.

THE BACK PAGE

The 1994 elections were the first to reflect the legislative redistricting that occurred as a result of the population shifts recorded by the 1990 Census. However, preparation for the next round of legislative redistricting has already begun. Think of it as similar to painting the Golden Gate Bridge--once you reach the end, it's time to start back at the beginning.

This month's "Back Page" looks at Phase I of Census 2000: the Block Boundary Suggestion Project.

CENSUS 2000: PHASE I BLOCK BOUNDARY SUGGESTION PROJECT

by Susan Byorth Fox, Research Analyst
Legislative Services Division

HISTORY

The beginning for redistricting throughout the country is the federal decennial census. The last census occurred on April 1, 1990. By federal law, the census data was released to the states within 1 year. The 1989 Legislature had appointed the Districting and Apportionment Commission whose duty it is to redistrict. Following receipt of the 1990 Census data, the Commission accomplished congressional redistricting on April 10, 1991.

Having completed the mandate for congressional redistricting, the Districting and Apportionment Commission held public hearings and redistricted the state legislative districts prior to the 1993 session. The 1993 Legislature was given the opportunity to review the plan before the Commission submitted it to the Secretary of State. The plan became official on February 24, 1993. From that point, the county clerk and recorders amended the necessary precinct lines, and the elections for the new districts took place in 1994. (A new redistricting plan will be submitted in approximately the year 2003, and the new districts will initially be up for election in approximately the year 2004.)

Back in D.C., the U.S. Bureau of the Census began developing the Census 2000 program after the delivery of the 1990 Census data. The Bureau solicited responses from those involved in the 1990 Census to determine its successes and failures and then developed and tested

suggested improvements. This preparation led to Phase I of the Census 2000, which is the Block Boundary Suggestion Project.

The states were invited to participate in the nonpartisan project in the spring of 1995, and Montana submitted a letter stating that the state wished to participate. The letter was signed by leadership from the majority and minority parties in both legislative houses and by Governor Racicot. As staff for the 1990 Districting and Apportionment Commission, I am privileged to work on this project and received training at the 1995 National Conference of State Legislatures annual meeting this past July.

BLOCK BOUNDARY SUGGESTION PROJECT

The BBSP allows state officials to suggest roads, rivers, streets, ridge lines, etc., that correspond to the boundaries of voting districts (precincts) to be used for the Census 2000. The Bureau of the Census will use acceptable "visible ground features" to design census blocks, which are the smallest unit of measure that the Bureau uses to report census data. Blocks are polygons composed of lines made by these visible features. Imagine being a census enumerator and having to correspond each housing unit to a physical space on a topological map; that's why visible features are needed.

The maps on which I will suggest the visible feature lines to "hold" are composed of TIGER/Line (or Topological Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing Line) files. Certain features, such as named roads and unnamed roads in incorporated places, will be guaranteed to be held. Other features that are acceptable are rivers, walkways and alleys, reservoirs, federal and state parks, railroads, fence lines, etc. Other features, such as ridge lines, may be used if supporting data can be supplied. It is my responsibility to suggest which lines need to be held, should be held (if possible), and need not be held.

The basic function is to ask the Bureau of the Census to hold certain lines so that when we get our population counts, we can better approximate voting districts, such as precincts within the legislative districts. This is more difficult than it sounds because many of these precinct lines are recorded by township and range lines and not by geographical features.

Montana participated in Phase I for the 1990 Census, but did not participate in Phase II, the Voting Tabulation District (VTD) project. Phase II allows us to draw in the actual voting district or precinct boundaries, as long as they match the lines suggested in Phase I. The opportunity to choose or decline participation in Phase II will occur in 1998. Participating in Phase I will assist participation in Phase II if the legislative

leaders and the Governor so choose and will assist us in the actual redistricting process.

I am sharing this information with you because it will impact your local government officials in the next year and eventually the entire Legislature through redistricting. This project will involve some interaction with county clerk and recorders or election administrators. The amount of interaction will depend on the number of districts and precincts in a county (some are included in only one district), the number of TIGER/Lines in the county, and the complexity of precinct boundaries and the extent to which we can match them with geographic lines. I am limited in what I can do, but there may be some oddities from the 1990 Census and redistricting that can be cleared up or inaccuracies that may be corrected for the next round. There are also other census projects that your county officials may have participated in or may be participating in, including: the Boundary Annexation Survey, which involves updating the boundaries of legal entities; geographic areas delineation; boundary verification and area delineation of American Indian and Alaska Native areas; and improvement of the TIGER Data Base in cooperation with units of local, state, and tribal governments, including improvement of the Master Address File with the U.S. Postal Service.

The Legislative Branch does not have the computer capability for much of this project, so I will be working with the Geographic Information Systems at the Natural Resource Information System of the Montana State Library. Although the year 2000 seems distant, the next 4 years will be busy. All the work that we can do in preparation for the next census and round of redistricting will serve us well.



INTERIM CALENDAR

UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED
ALL ROOM DESIGNATIONS ARE IN THE CAPITOL

SEPTEMBER

September 4, Labor Day, holiday

September 7, Subcommittee on Foreign Investment Depository, Helena
Norwest Bank, 9 a.m.

September 14 and 15, Environmental Quality Council, Room 108

September 15, Legislative Council, Room 104

September 29, Revenue Oversight Committee, Room 104

OCTOBER

October 5 and 6, Juvenile Justice and Mental Health Study
Commission, Kalispell

October 9, Columbus Day, holiday

October 13, Legislative Finance Committee, Room 104

October 23, Joint Committee on Postsecondary Education Policy and
Budget, Room 104

October 26 and 27, Oversight Committee on Children and Families

October 27, Subcommittee on Foreign Investment Depository,
University of Montana, Missoula

Montana Legislative Council
State Capitol Room 138
Helena MT 59620-1706

